

Please amend the claims as follows:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended): A process for the manufacture of (all-*rac*)- α -tocopherol ~~comprising carrying out an~~ by the acid-catalyzed reaction of trimethylhydroquinone with isophytol or phytol, ~~characterized by carrying out the reaction~~ in the presence of methane trisulphonate as the catalyst in an organic solvent, the amount of the methane trisulphonate catalyst being about 0.01 mole % to about 0.1 mole % of the amount of educt trimethylhydroquinone or isophytol/phytol, whichever is in the lesser molar amount.

2. (Currently amended): A process according to claim 1, wherein the solvent is a polar aprotic organic solvent, ~~such as a dialkyl or alkylene carbonate, e.g. dimethyl carbonate, diethyl carbonate, ethylene carbonate, propylene carbonate or 1,2-butylene carbonate; an aliphatic ester, e.g. butyl acetate; an aliphatic ketone, e.g. diethyl ketone; or a lactone, e.g. γ -butyrolactone; or a mixture of two or more of such solvents, or a two-phase solvent system comprising a polar aprotic organic solvent, such as one or a mixture of several of the aforementioned, and a non-polar aprotic organic solvent, such as an alkane, e.g. hexane, heptane or octane.~~

3. (Currently amended): A process according to claim 2, wherein the solvent is a biphasic solvent system comprising ethylene carbonate, propylene carbonate or 1,2-butylene carbonate, or a mixture of two or all three of these polar aprotic organic solvents, as the one solvent phase, and hexane, heptane or octane as the other (non-polar aprotic organic solvent) solvent phase, ~~especially a biphasic solvent system of ethylene carbonate and heptane, of propylene carbonate and heptane or of a mixture of ethylene and propylene carbonate and heptane.~~

4. (Currently amended): A process according to claim 2 ~~or claim 3~~, wherein the solvent is a biphasic solvent system of which the volume ratio of the non-polar aprotic organic solvent to the polar aprotic organic solvent is in the range from

about 1:10 to about 5 : 1, ~~preferably 1 : 3 to about 5 : 1, most preferably from about 1 : 1.25 to about 2:1.~~

5. (Currently amended): A process according to claim 1 [[any one of claims 1 to 4]], wherein the amount of the methane trisulphonate catalyst is about 0.0125 mole % to about 0.08 mole % of the amount of educt trimethylhydroquinone or isophytol/phytol, whichever is in the lesser molar amount.

6. (Currently amended): A process according to claim 1 ~~any one of claims 4 to 5~~, wherein the molar ratio of trimethylhydroquinone to isophytol or phytol is about 1.25: 1 to about 2.2 : 1, ~~preferably about 1.5 : 1 to about 2 : 1.~~

7. (Currently amended): A process according to claim 1 ~~any one of claims 4 to 6~~, wherein the reaction is effected at temperatures from about 80°C to about 160°C, ~~preferably from about 90°C to about 150°C, especially from about 100°C to about 142°C.~~

8. (Currently amended): A process according to claim 1 ~~any one of claims 4 to 7~~, wherein about 0.5-2 ml, ~~preferably about 0.75-1.25 ml, most preferably about 0.9-1.1 ml,~~ of a polar aprotic organic solvent are used per mmol of trimethylhydroquinone.

9. (Currently amended): A process according to claim 1 ~~any one of claims 4 to 8~~, wherein the process is carried out under an inert gas atmosphere, ~~preferably gaseous nitrogen or argon.~~

10. (Currently amended): A process according to claim 1 ~~any one of claims 1 to 9~~, wherein the process is carried out batchwise or continuously, and by adding isophytol or phytol, as such or in solution, portionwise to a mixture of the catalyst, the trimethylhydroquinone and the solvent.

11. (New): A process according to claim 2, wherein the polar aprotic organic solvent is selected from the group consisting of a dialkyl or alkylene carbonate;

an aliphatic ester; an aliphatic ketone; and a lactone; and the non-polar aprotic organic solvent, if present, is an alkane.

12. (New): A process according to claim 11, wherein the dialkyl or alkylene carbonate is selected from the group consisting of dimethyl carbonate, diethyl carbonate, ethylene carbonate, propylene carbonate and 1,2-butylene carbonate; the aliphatic ester is butyl acetate; the aliphatic ketone is diethyl ketone; the lactone is γ -butyrolactone; and the alkane, if present, is selected from the group consisting of hexane, heptane, and octane.

13. (New): A process according to claim 3, wherein the solvent is a biphasic solvent system of ethylene carbonate and heptane, of propylene carbonate and heptane, or of a mixture of ethylene and propylene carbonate and heptane.

14. (New): A process according to claim 4, wherein the volume ratio of the non-polar aprotic organic solvent to the polar aprotic organic solvent is in the range from about 1 : 3 to about 5 : 1.

15. (New): A process according to claim 14, wherein the volume ratio of the non-polar aprotic organic solvent to the polar aprotic organic solvent is in the range from about 1 : 1.25 to about 2:1.

16. (New): A process according to claim 6, wherein the molar ratio of trimethylhydroquinone to isophytol or phytol is about 1.5 : 1 to about 2 : 1.

17. (New): A process according to claim 7, wherein the reaction is effected at temperatures from about 90°C to about 150°C.

18. (New): A process according to claim 17, wherein the reaction is effected at temperatures from about 100°C to about 142°C.

19. (New): A process according to claim 8, wherein about 0.75-1.25 ml of a polar aprotic organic solvent are used per mmol of trimethylhydroquinone.

20. (New): A process according to claim 19, wherein about 0.9-1.1 ml of a polar aprotic organic solvent are used per mmol of trimethylhydroquinone.

21. (New): A process according to claim 9, wherein the inert gas atmosphere is nitrogen or argon.